



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

February 3, 2006

TUNNEL TASK FORCE SETS UP TOLL-FREE LINE FOR CASE LEADS

SAN DIEGO – U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials in San Diego today announced the creation of a toll-free phone number for the public to use to provide information about the recently discovered Otay Mesa tunnel and any other leads about underground passageways along the California-Mexico border.

The toll-free tip line, which was activated overnight, can be reached round-the-clock at **1-877-9TUNNEL**. Investigators are seeking information from anyone who has knowledge about the Otay Mesa tunnel, both its construction and its subsequent use. Agents are also interested in any leads involving other as yet undiscovered cross-border passageways.

The tip line is the latest effort by the multi-agency San Diego Tunnel Task force, made up of ICE, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Border Patrol, to obtain evidence in the ongoing investigation into the longest, most sophisticated smuggling tunnel ever uncovered along the U.S.-Mexico border. ICE agents emphasized that callers to the bilingual tip line may remain anonymous if they choose.

“The discovery of this tunnel shows the extraordinary lengths to which criminals will go to break our laws and violate our borders,” said Frank Marwood, acting deputy special agent-in-charge of ICE investigations in San Diego. “The agents working on this investigation are willing to go to equally extraordinary lengths to combat this activity and bring those responsible to justice.”

Last weekend, investigators made their first arrest in the case, Carlos Eugenio Cardenas-Calvillo. The 44-year-old Mexican national, who worked at the Otay Mesa warehouse that housed the tunnel’s U.S. entrance, is charged with conspiracy to import a controlled substance.

Meanwhile, agents remain concerned that witnesses who have been in the tunnel, or were responsible for its design or construction, are in imminent danger. ICE is urging those persons to come forward and has pledged it will do everything in its power to ensure their safety.

The tunnel discovery is the result of a long-term investigation by the Tunnel Task Force. The Task Force is using an array of high-tech equipment and intelligence information to pinpoint the location of underground passageways along the border in the region. Since 9/11, federal authorities have discovered more than 20 cross-border tunnels along the U.S.-Mexico border in California and Arizona.

#ICE#